

Message Text

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41

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-06 L-03 NSC-05 SS-15 JUSE-00 SAB-01

DLOS-04 SAL-01 H-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 PM-04 PRS-01

USIE-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /067 W

----- 065907

O R 282300Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7555

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, PFOR, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: GOP REQUEST FOR SEIZURE OF US FLAG VESSEL

REF: PANAMA 2968

1. PER HINSON-BECKER TELECON 4/28, FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF NOTE OF INTERIM REPLY WHICH EMBASSY PROPOSES TO SEND TO FOREIGN MINISTRY. AS NOTED REFTEL, FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD REQUESTED THIS MORNING THAT EMBASSY SEND SUCH NOTE TO ASSIST HIM IN HANDLING SITUATION WITHIN GOP.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA AND HAS THE HONOR TO REFER TO THE MINISTRY'S NOTE NUMBER DREU-91/1085 OF APRIL 26, 1976, RELATING TO THE SHIP "VOYAGER".

THE EMBASSY HAS THE HONOR TO ADVISE THE MINISTRY THAT THE LOCAL AGENTS FOR THE OWNERS FO THE SHIP "VOYAGER" HAVE PROVIDED THE EMBASSY WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

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THE AGENTS STATE THAT THE LOG OF THE SHIP "VOYAGER"

INDICATES THAT ITS FINAL SET OF NETS ENDED AT 0940 ON SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1976, AT APPROXIMATE POSITION 83 DEGREES 15' WEST 06DEGREES 5' NORTH IN COSTA RICAN WATERS, AND THAT THE SHIP TOOK NO FISH AFTER THIS TIME. THE SHIP'S AGENT STATES FURTHER THAT THE CAPTAIN OF THE "VOYAGER" ADVISED THE AGENT THAT THE SHIP WAS PROCEEDING DIRECTLY TO BALBOA WITH THE INTENT OF TRANSITING THE PANAMA CANAL EN ROUTE TO THE SHIP'S HOME PORT AT SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO.

THE AGENTS STATE THAT THE SHIP'S LOG FURTHER INDICATES THAT BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 1300 AND 1605 ON SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1976, THE "VOYAGER" WAS WASHING ITS NETS AT A POSITION APPROXIMATELY 15 MILES WEST OF MONTUOSA ISLAND IN PANAMANIAN WATERS; WASHING OF NETS, THE AGENTS STATT, IS A NORMAL PRACTICE OF TUNA VESSELS PRIOR TO TRANSIT OF THE PANAMA CANAL. THE AGENTS FURTHER STATE THAT THE SHIP'S LOG NOTES THAT, DURING THIS PERIOD, THE SHIP SIGHTED A PANAMANIAN AIRCRAFT. THEREAFTER, THE AGENTS STATE, THE SHIP PROCEEDED TO BALBOA AS PREVIOUSLY PLANNED.

THE THE EMBASSY EXPRESSES THE HOPE THAT THE FOREGOING INFORMATION WILL BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THE MINISTRY IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVENTS DISCUSSED IN THE MINISTRY'S AFOREMENTIONED NOTE OF APRIL 26.
COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE. END QUOTE.

3. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, "VOYAGER" WILL TRANSIT CANAL NIGHT OF APRIL 28-29, AND IS TO ANCHOR AT CRISTOBAL THEREAFTER. AT OWNER'S INSTRUCTIONS, SHIP WILL BE HELD IN CRISTOBAL IN HOPES THAT THIS MATTER CAN BE AMICABLY RESOLVED AND SHIP CAN LEAVE WITHOUT HAVING PROBLEMS WITH PANAMA IN FUTURE. ACCORDINGLY, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT. AUTHORIZATION TO DISPATCH SUCH NOTE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
JORDEN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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